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AMERICAN IDEALS OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Because of the many contributions made by America to the world's ideals of government, the nation has the feeling that it is quite adequate to work out its own principles on all other subjects without the aid of any other people. "What have we to do with abroad?" said a United States senator from Ohio, only thirty years ago; and the word "un-American" covers a multitude of virtues. In fact the roots of American institutions of all kinds, social, economic, and political, are in the traditions of the English race; and American ideals have been modified by the experience of other European nations. Nor has the western hemisphere been separated from the great current of world affairs. Its destinies have been closely interwoven with those of Europe; and since 1895 the United States has awakened to the fact that it not only is a part of the sisterhood of nations, but is destined to be one of the half dozen states which will powerfully influence the future of all the continents. The world is no longer round about America; America is part of the world.

The great disturbing element in modern history is the opening up of an unknown continent to European civilization. The conventional subdivisions of Europe were disturbed, the old-fashioned balance of powers was broken up, when Spain, chiefly through the wealth derived from America in the sixteenth century, rose to be the first military, naval, commercial, and territorial power in Europe; then the Protestant Reformation set England off as the enemy of France and Spain. That America was rich seemed to Drake a reason for plundering it; that his colonies were plundered led Philip II. to fit out the Invincible Armada of 1588; that the Armada was defeated caused Spain in 1604 to yield a peace in which the English would make no pledge against colonization in America; the peace of 1604 opened the way for the English to plant Virginia in 1607; that Virginia was planted was a new reason for hostility between the two naval and colonizing powers. From that time Spain, Holland, France, and England were rivals, not only in European wars and in

contests for the carrying trade, but in seizing America. Their trading companies quarreled and fought each other for the possession of harbors like New York, and fur preserves like Hudson Bay. The little colonies sent embassies and naval expeditions upon each other; and more than once rivalries in the colonies led to wars in Europe.

During the seventeenth century the natural enemy of the English colonist was the Spaniard. Though from the treaty of peace of 1604 to the opening of the era of general wars in 1689 the two countries were for the most part nominally friends, the diplomacy of England and of the colonists alike was devoted to justifying by dispatches or by double-shotted guns the successive takings of territory claimed by Spain. First Virginia, in 1607; then various West India Islands, culminating with the conquest of Jamaica in 1655; then the Carolinas in 1664; then, by the treaty of Madrid in 1670, after a century of denial Spain was compelled to admit that there might be such a thing as a lawful English colony in America. With Holland the traditional friendship between two neighboring Protestant powers was broken in 1651, when England began to move against the Dutch commerce; and four naval wars followed within twenty years, in the course of which the Dutch lost New Netherland, which was their footing in the American continent. The French were strongly seated on the Saint Lawrence, and notwithstanding two wars, held their own both there and in Nova Scotia.

From 1689 to 1763, in four great wars crowned by the treaties of Ryswick in 1697, of Utrecht in 1713, of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748, and of Paris in 1763, England became undisputed master of the whole of North America east of the Mississippi and the Isle d'Orleans, together with Hudson Bay. In these wars and negotiations the original issue was the determination of England, at first allied with Holland, to prevent a combination of French and Spanish power in Europe and also in the new world. England was fighting for liberty of trade in the Caribbean, and also for new territory within which to plant colonies which should not have liberty of trade with other countries. The English were looking forward to a future when eastern North America should be a populous part of a powerful empire; and in the process developed the principle that the power that has control of the seas can pick up the enemy's col-

onies and destroy his commerce at pleasure, the principle to which a modern writer has given the name of Sea Power.

Although the colonists went obediently to war whenever they were officially informed that the Temple of Janus was open in Europe, and accepted such terms of peace as were agreed on by European cabinets, they began to see that they had a share in their own international destiny. They took part in the wars by land operations usually under the command of an English general, by separate expeditions on their own responsibility, or in combination with British naval forces: they took Quebec in 1629, Port Royal in 1690, aided in the humiliating failure at Cartagena in 1740, captured Louisburg in 1745, and helped to take it again in 1758. Their privateers shared in the delightful risks of commerce destroyers in all the wars. They had a confused sense that, while from one point of view they were a part of the British empire, from another standpoint they were allies of the mother country.

Thus prepared by a century and a half of relations with other countries, the revolting colonies in 1775 easily took up the task of a nation; and no part of the triumph of the Revolution is more striking than the quick acceptance of the United States of America as one of the sisterhood of nations. France, Holland, and Spain all had old grudges, which were gratified by welcoming this separated scion of the English stock. Spain alone realized that the United States was the first independent power that had ever been established in America, and that its success spelled the eventual breaking down of the ideal of European colonies. Not even Spain understood that independent America meant eventually a disturbance of the world's balance of power.

In foreign relations the process of nation-making went on smoothly. At first a secret committee of congress was corresponding through unofficial agents with continental powers; in a few weeks the Continental Congress was commissioning ministers and giving them instructions; in a few months, through the skill of Franklin, John Adams, and John Jay, the three most successful diplomats of that period, the United States of America were proposing treaties to His Most Christian Majesty of France, and to their High Mightinesses the States General of Holland. For the first time,

America came into friendly relations with other than English-speaking people, and the French treaty of 1778 was not simply the means of obtaining aid, without which the revolution would have failed; it included the untaxed admission of French goods, French officers, and French political ideas into America. In 1780 the United States even entered into the Armed Neutrality, in which the other members were Holland, Russia, and the northern powers. Within the next five years commercial treaties were negotiated with Holland, Prussia, and Sweden.

Still greater was the triumph of the treaty of peace, in 1782, which was in essence a partition of sovereignty in America between Great Britain, Spain, and the United States. For the moment, the British saw the necessity for conciliating the daughter country, acquiesced in ample boundaries, and seemed likely to make such concessions of trade as would keep the United States a special British market. Then came the first of several critical errors by Great Britain. Observing that the French trade had already dropped off, and believing that the states would not and could not form a close union, the desired treaty was denied; and on both sides exasperating questions, of small moment in themselves, were allowed to accumulate.

The practical lessons of the Revolution, as to external affairs, were first of all that the new republic, however little experienced in international relations, had diplomats who could make the most of every advantage. John Adams, emerging from his law office, was as vigorous and almost as successful as Franklin, the cosmopolite statesman.

The second ideal was that the United States was to be a sort of makeweight between France and England, thus helping to break up the European balance of powers, which then consisted of England, France, Prussia, and Austria. The commercial ideal of the time was that of a country without manufactures and exporting raw products, which desired free trade outward, and was willing to admit foreign commerce on equal terms with its own. It was therefore a keen disappointment when England treated the United States not only as politically but as commercially independent, by withdrawing the favorable status which the colonies had enjoyed in their trade with each other. For forty years to come the West India trade was not

open to American bottoms. The consequence was an American theory, not at first shared by any other nation, that colonial systems and monopolies of colonial commerce were in their nature unjust and unfriendly to other powers.

All these crude and not altogether harmonious ideals were tested, or rather deflected, by the quarter century of European wars following the French Revolution of 1789. Though recognized as a sister nation, the United States was only a little sister, destined to ask for many things not thought by her elders to be good for her. Lacking a navy, American diplomacy could be backed up by force only when directed against Canada or the Spanish possessions; and in the Napoleonic wars the great contestants both looked upon the United States as an international factor only because of her vexatious neutral trade. Under these circumstances it was partly luck, but still more the farsight of her statesmen, which for the ten years from 1793 to 1803 made American diplomacy undeniably successful. The effort of the French minister, Genet, to stampede the Americans away from their President was a failure. A threat of war brought England to concede the Jay treaty of 1794, of which the negotiator might have said "a poor thing, but mine own." It had the unquestionable merit of preventing war and securing a part of the desires of the Americans. The Spanish treaty of 1795 cleared the southwestern boundary. After committing the blunder, so much worse than a crime, of trying to bribe the American negotiators in the X. Y. Z. affair, the French government in 1800 ended a naval war by a favorable peace. In 1803, after a brief renewal of Louis Fourteenth's dream of a combined French and Spanish colonial empire, Napoleon turned over the lower Mississippi and the immense Louisiana territory to what thus became the leading power in America.

Then came twelve years of humiliation, in which the Jay treaty was allowed to expire and could not be renewed. In the renewal of the death grapple between "the elephant and the whale," the French army and the English navy, the rights of American neutral commerce were ignored. Established principles of international law were set aside, and fifteen hundred American merchantmen were made prize to one or the other of the belligerents by a series of iniquitous orders in council and decrees. American sailors were seized

by British and even by French cruisers on the high seas,— in one case out of a duly commissioned American man-of-war. The Yankee shipmasters protested and at the same time went on making money by various innocent or fraudulent evasions of their neutral obligations.

After eight years of fruitless diplomacy the country entered into the war of 1812 at the inopportune moment when Napoleon was penetrating Russia, there to be overwhelmed by the snows. The difficulty was that in the death grapple between England and France the rights and the wrongs, the friendship or the hostility, of America seemed a little thing. Jefferson discovered that great nations at war are not moved by ideals of permanent self-interest or by the plaints of a defenseless government.

Nevertheless, during the war of 1812, the Americans discovered that they possessed a talisman which could move even proud Albion: the victories of American cruisers in eleven out of thirteen ship duels, combined with the heroism of the privateers, convinced the English that after all David was a likely youth, whose sling might disturb the peace of the nations. Hence in the peace of Ghent, in 1814, terms highly favorable to the United States were secured.

From that time down to the Civil War, the United States had the respect of all European nations, and the advantage in most negotiations. It was a period when the hemispheres were educating each other. From America proceeded a current of popular government which, first revealed in the French Revolution, ran through western Europe. France, Switzerland, Germany, Italy, Spain, Greece, and, above all, England, felt the democratic spirit, accepted liberal constitutions or fundamental statutes, occasionally set up temporary republics, and in Switzerland revived and perpetuated the ancient republican spirit. On the other hand, the Americans by the right of descent took to themselves the splendid heritage of English literature; outside the works of their statesmen they had little else to read before the dawn of their own golden age of literature about 1830. Direct French influence declined after the eighteenth century, but the Germans, through their immigrants, through their influence on American educators, through their love for music, became a vital force in America. Every immigrating race brought some of its folk lore and traditions, and in the case of the Germans its national

beverages. Americans like Bayard Taylor visited Europe and wrote popular accounts of their experiences; while scores of Europeans published their American travels. The Atlantic, no longer a barrier between nations, was bringing the old world and the new into a common understanding.

Before the French wars were over began a movement which totally changed the relations of the United States to her neighbors: the revolt of the Latin-American colonies, beginning in 1806, renewed in 1814, and completed in 1825, removed from both the North and South American continents every foreign flag except that of Great Britain; and thus opened up a field of influence and of annexation in which the United States was paramount. The consciousness of a new responsibility was seen in the Monroe Doctrine of 1823; and the British, through the offer of Canning to make a joint declaration against the interference of the Holy Alliance, recognized the United States as the only other substantial American power. Within ten years thereafter Great Britain gave up her colonial system, then nearly two centuries old; met the United States half way in compromises on the boundaries of Maine and of Oregon; entered into a reciprocity treaty in 1854 for Canada; and in every way strove to undo the national sense of ill-usage from the mother country. Great Britain made no effort to prevent the expansion of the United States in Texas, New Mexico, and California; and when those annexations brought up the long-debated question of an Isthmus canal, by the Clayton-Bulwer treaty of 1850 again recognized the fact that the United States had at least an equal interest in a waterway across the narrow lands.

In territory, in prestige, in influence, in relations to the far distant canal, the United States occupied a bold and strong position in the eyes of the world; and American influence was felt at the Antipodes. In 1844, taking advantage of the lodgement of European powers in China, a commercial treaty was obtained with that power. In 1854 the United States, without the aid or license of any other nation, broke down the wall of seclusion which inclosed Japan, and opened up the commerce and the political life of that people to western influence. The country was eager to annex Cuba, and thus to acquire a foothold in the Caribbean Sea; and three or four times seemed on the point of accomplishing that purpose.

Perhaps this spirit of territorial expansion was at that time the dominant ideal of the country in foreign relations; and it would have been more successful but for what was really an accidental complication with the growth of slavery. A second ideal of the time was that of special interest in Latin-America, based upon the notion of two spheres of the world's diplomacy, an eastern and a western, each separate from the other. Another ideal was that of freedom of movement about the world: Americans expected to be admitted into any country which they thought they would like to see; the Yankee clipper ship carried the American flag into every sea; and Americans stood for the right of neutrals to carry on their commerce, even though inconvenient to one or the other of two belligerents. So far as they could, Americans carried the political ideals of free movement, of equality and self-government into international relations.

The Civil War disturbed international harmonies which had lasted for two generations, and upset the dearest American tenets of international law. The northern conception that the southern confederacy was a treasonable riot, not deserving the amenities of honorable warfare, did not fit with the usual principles of international law, nor with the practice of blockading southern ports and exchanging prisoners of war. To the mind of the federal government there was no such thing as neutrality in the Civil War, and duly commissioned cruisers, issuing from southern ports to prey upon northern commerce, were looked upon as nothing but pirates; while the recognition by Great Britain of the belligerency of the Southern Confederacy, nearly a month after that belligerency had practically been acknowledged by President Lincoln's blockade proclamation, was then, and for ten years after, considered a deliberate affront. When the British mail steamer *Trent* was seized on the high seas, President Lincoln was obliged to say that we seemed to be doing what had caused the war of 1812 when done by Great Britain. Privateering also, which from the dawn of colonization to the end of the war of 1812 had been the favorite pursuit of adventurous seamen, was now held up as a crime against humanity.

The reason for this outburst of public opinion was partly a feeling of rage at what seemed like the intention of foreign governments to favor the Confederacy. The most decisive battles in the first two years of the civil war were fought in the offices of the British and

French foreign ministers in London and Paris. When Earl Russell, under pressure from our minister, Charles Francis Adams, declared that he would not again receive the confederate envoys, the first redoubt was carried; when in 1862, Mr. Gladstone, a member of the government, publicly declared that "Mr. Jefferson Davis and other leaders of the South have made an army; they are making a navy; and they have made a nation!" England and many thoughtful men in the United States thought the battle had gone against the union. Foreign relations meant something when the outcome of the Civil War depended on the question whether or not foreign nations would forego their cotton, admit the right of blockade, hold off their vessels of war, and leave the struggle to be fought out on the continent of North America.

Eventually the skill of Mr. Adams in England, combined with some timely victories, persuaded England, in whose wake followed France, that the Confederacy would probably fail. Unfortunately, in derogation of international law several confederate cruisers built in British ports were allowed to go to sea, and the most destructive of them, the *Alabama*, gave her name to a sentiment and a negotiation, which involved Great Britain and the United States in dangerous controversies. It was not the British nation, but the aristocratic government for the time being, which had hoped for confederate success; and in 1867 a reform in the suffrage liberalized the government. The new dispensation was shrewd enough to see the danger of leaving alive the resentment of the victorious north; hence in 1869 Great Britain agreed to a commission of arbitration to decide upon the American claims, under certain previously accepted rules, which made it certain that Great Britain would be adjudged in the wrong. This was a great concession for a proud people to make; but it probably averted war, and certainly led to the Geneva arbitration of 1872, which practically found a verdict against Great Britain, but limited the damage to fifteen and a half million dollars. While this controversy was pending the United States also adjusted a long standing account with Napoleon III., who had taken advantage of the civil war to set up a despotism in Mexico. In 1867 he was compelled to withdraw his troops without arbitration and without indemnity.

In 1875, therefore, the United States found almost all the old grievances adjusted. The civil war made the world understand that there was enormous potential military strength in America; but that the people preferred peace, and had no objections to other nations making sacrifices to preserve it. The Americans had a new ideal of their position in the world, and felt that principles of international intercourse which were desirable for their comfort must perforce be international law. If they captured a vessel bound to Mexico on the ground that her cargo was bound to Texas, thenceforth other nations must accept that principle; if they intended that no other power should take Cuba away from Spain, that, too, was "crowners quest law." The most important residuum of the Civil War was, however, a great bitterness toward Great Britain, because the action of that power was supposed to have prolonged the war; it was nothing like the bitterness felt by the Confederates toward the same power, because they felt that the English had deserted them in their hour of need.

The United States was now indubitably a great power, but not a world power so long as most of her controversies and interests were within the two Americas. The rapid growth of general military service on the continent brought about difficulties with young men who emigrated to America and afterward returned home, and by an act of 1865 and a series of treaties, the United States admitted the principle that a naturalized American citizen might lose his citizenship through making a stay too long in his country of origin; and this meant, of course, that a man might in the course of his life be the acknowledged citizen of several different powers. In Latin-America the United States began to use her great influence to heal dissensions, or at least to compel the rival powers to come to terms. In 1881 the effort to hold back Chile from annexing Peru was a flat failure. In 1890 the national government was curiously seen espousing the cause of a desperate dictator against a popular congress in Chile. In 1895 the United States compelled Great Britain to arbitrate a boundary claim with Venezuela. In 1903 the same power was protected against a threatened military occupation by Germany. These acts, combined with remarkable dispatches by Secretary Olney, in 1895, on the Monroe Doctrine, showed that the United States

had an enlarged ideal of the duty to keep peace in America and to prevent European powers from setting up colonies or protectorates.

This general theory was extended to the Pacific, where the United States claimed a share in the Samoan Islands. It was shown in Cuba, where the United States compelled Spain to make peace after a ten years' civil war, in 1878; and twenty years later sent an armed force, which compelled the Spaniards to give up the island. By the annexation of the Philippines and other small Pacific islands and of the Hawaiian islands in 1898 and 1899, by sharing in the expedition of 1902 against the Chinese Boxers, the United States asserted an interest and a duty in Asia. The possession of the Philippines aroused new interest in the Panama Canal as a connection between the opposite coasts of North America and a highway from the North Atlantic to the far Pacific. When, in 1903, the United States came into possession of the canal strip by a treaty with the infant republic of Panama, there could no longer be any claim that the United States was simply an American power. From Manila to Maine, from Alaska to Porto Rico, the influence and the majesty of the United States is felt.

A result of this swift and eventful diplomatic experience is that Americans hold to an ideal of open and almost public diplomacy. Tocqueville, in 1835, thought democracy unfavorable to a strong foreign policy. Yet nothing upon which the people of the United States have set their hearts has been denied them: when they wanted unrestricted trade with other people's colonies, eventually they got it; when they wanted reciprocity with Canada, they had it; when they wanted to limit international trade by protective tariffs, all the European countries except Great Britain fell in with that notion. Democratic simplicity, backed up by the force of ninety million people, is sometimes brutally frank and explicit, but it carries its points, as when, in 1898, the Spaniards discovered that the American envoys in Paris had not the smallest intention of conceding any hairsbreadth of what they had been instructed to urge.

Americans are little accustomed to consider the feeling of weaker neighbors. From 1789 to 1898 our diplomacy with Spain was a succession of ultimata, coming up to the abandonment of Cuba; hence people seem to suppose that the absorption of Canada can be

brought about simply by talking about it; that we can annex Mexico and Central America whenever we feel like it; that the British West Indies are held by our sufferance. Americans think diplomacy, especially with weak powers, a kind of solitaire.

As to colonial trade, the United States has seen a great light since it has acquired dependencies; and we are now applying to the Philippines much the same limitations as to coasting trade and the movements of commerce as those which caused such resentment when continued by Great Britain in the West Indies after the Revolution. We stand for the open door in China, and for the closed door in our own dependencies.

Americans have an ideal of influence in Asia, already strong both in trade and in diplomatic influence in Japan. They have already exercised almost an authority in the adjustments between western powers in general and the Chinese government, standing in general for fair dealing and the integrity of the empire; yet on the other hand willing to offend four hundred million people by petty squabbles on a steamer dock, as to whether a particular Chinaman is a merchant or a mechanic.

Americans are prone to think that a nation with so many people, so many millions of money, and so many ships of war, must have always sound views on contested questions of diplomacy; what is desirable for their comfort and the peace of their neighborhood seems to them international law. In 1895 Secretary Olney, in his dispatches on the Venezuela question, declared that the Monroe Doctrine was

American public law firmly established. * * * today the United States is practically sovereign on this continent, and its fiat is law upon the subjects to which it confines its interposition.

The very term international law means something that is a fiat because of international agreement and general acceptance. The true spirit of the country is better expressed in its warm interest in the development through The Hague Tribunal of a method of settling international questions outside the fiat of a particular country. If there be an American ideal of the relations of this country with the outer world it is one of peace founded on mutual understanding and mutual respect.

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